

Bentley CEVC & Copdock Primary Schools whole school food policy

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| Approved by: Whole Governing Board | Date: March 2025 |
| Consulted with: pupils, parents, teachers and governors. | |
| Last reviewed on: | |
| Next review due by: | Spring 2026 |

At Bentley and Copdock Primary Schools, we are committed to promoting balanced eating habits and ensuring all children enjoy nutritious food. We recognise that children come from diverse home backgrounds, cultures, ethnic and faith groups. Our schools aim to meet the needs of all children and ensure equality of provision whilst taking account of this diversity and difference.

This policy was devised in consultation with children, families, teachers and governors.

Water

It has been recognised that children's concentration and behaviour improve when children drink water throughout the day. Dehydration can give children headaches and make them tired. Therefore, we encourage all pupils to bring a bottle of water (rather than squash) to school each day. The more it is offered, the more readily they will accept it. These can be kept at school and will be filled and emptied each day. This will allow children to have access to fresh drinking water throughout each day.

Contents of a balanced pack lunch

We encourage families to include:

- A portion of fruit and/or vegetables (e.g., apple, carrot sticks, or cherry tomatoes).
- A source of protein (e.g., lean meat, eggs, beans, or cheese).
- A starchy carbohydrate (e.g., wholemeal bread, pasta, or rice).
- A dairy or dairy alternative (e.g., yoghurt or milk).
- A drink (e.g., water, milk, or diluted fruit juice).

Foods to Avoid and limit:

To ensure health and safety, the following items should not be included:

- Fizzy or sugary drinks, including energy drinks.
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars or sweets.
- Crisps or fried snacks (baked alternatives are acceptable in moderation). Children could be given crisps on Fridays – 'Crisp Friday'.
- Fruit winder type products
- Chocolate sandwich spread

Sustainability

We encourage the use of reusable containers, cutlery and water bottles to minimise waste. Please avoid single-use plastics wherever possible.

Storage and Hygiene

- Packed lunches should be stored in a suitable lunchbox to keep food fresh.

- We recommend including an ice pack if items need to be kept cool, as refrigeration is not available.

Special Occasions

On special occasions (e.g., birthdays or class celebrations), parents/carers/teachers may provide small treats.

Celebration treats that are sent into school to celebrate birthdays are allowed. Where possible these will be distributed at home time, so parents are able to monitor this.

Monitoring and Feedback

On a daily basis the staff in school see what children have in their lunchboxes whilst supervising in the dining hall. This is an opportunity for them to talk with the children about their lunchboxes and to encourage balanced eating and drinking. However, we may send parents a reminder of this policy if lunchbox contents regularly fall short of the expectations in this policy. It is not our intention to tell parents what and how they should be feeding their children and we will not do so, but we want to work with parents to educate our children about dietary choices so that they can make their own informed choices independently when they are older. This will also be reinforced by learning within the curriculum.

Food that your child has not eaten in their pack lunch will be left and sent home for you to check and monitor.

School Dinners

We encourage all parents to take up the opportunity of school dinners, especially at KS1 because they are free. Daily hot meals are offered alongside a salad and fruit bar as well as a low sugar desert. In addition to this, there are also options for jacket potatoes and sandwiches. Please look at the menu which is emailed to parents termly and added to the school website [Bentley CEVC & Copdock Primary Federation: Meals](#).

The catering company follow the [School Food Standards](#) which sets out the guidelines for eating in school as well as consulting the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services to help reduce salt, saturated fat and sugar in children's diets. This enables the amount of sugar to be closely monitored across the whole menu. For example-the use of sachets ensures no more than one teaspoon of any condiment. These measures reduce foods high in sugar and prevent deserts from being 'highly sugary'. Sugar is reduced (if not eliminated) from cake recipes but of course, they still need to be palatable and enjoyable for the children.

Special Diets

We understand children may have clinically diagnosed special dietary requirements. Parents are responsible for making the school aware of any such diet. There is a set procedure for requesting a medical diet for a school meal so please contact the office in the first instance to seek advice.

Food Allergies

Keeping children with allergies safe during the time they are in our school requires proactive strategies and actions. Navigating the complexities of food allergen management requires whole organisation awareness. To support this, we have considered guidance and recommendations from Anaphylaxis UK. Best practice addresses key areas such as staff training, communication, policies and procedures.

By adopting a holistic approach to allergen management, we can create a safer, more inclusive environment that fosters trust and loyalty among all our community.

We acknowledge that it is impossible for schools to be completely free of allergens, and many allergens can cause severe reactions; this is not only nuts but can also be milk and eggs for example. Banning food products such as nuts does not represent day to day life and can cause complacency and therefore risks. Accordingly, we will work with families to develop skills and support the management of an allergy; developing a broader awareness.

On occasions of events and visits, it may be necessary to request no nut products in pack lunches due to the venue's policy.

Cultural Diversity

We endeavour to ensure that foods meet the cultural needs of all our children. Our Design & Technology curriculum also supports this and provides opportunities for pupils to learn about food from a range of different cultures.

Curriculum

Our curriculum promotes knowledge and life skills for food. Children are taught how to cook and apply the principles of balanced eating through the phases. At Phase 1 / 2, children explore what a healthy diet means. Phase 3 / 4 learn about how food affects their minds and bodies. This progresses in Phase 5 / 6 to how food makes them feel.

Cooking outside is also included within the Forest School curriculum where children make simple recipes using equipment such as the fire pit, cooking tripod and storm kettle.

After School Clubs

Wherever possible, school will run clubs to promote food knowledge and cooking skills; these may include Christmas Cake club and limited cooking club sessions.

School Snacks

A snack club is run by the children at school and a member of staff purchases the snacks. Decisions about which snacks to provide are informed by the food label traffic light guide and the School Food Standards Practical Guide. Children have the following options for a snack at breaktime:

- Bring a piece of fruit from home which must be kept separately from their lunch box
- Eat fruit provided in school
- Purchase a (10p) snack from the school snack shop; rice/corn cake

Early Years Foundation Stage Snacks

In Reception, snack time is crucial as it provides a valuable opportunity for children to not only refuel their energy but also develop essential social, personal and cognitive skills through tasks such as self-serving, paying (with plastic money), conversation, taking turns and practising hygiene, all while fostering positive relationship with food and eating habits.

Breakfast Club

Children who access breakfast club on a school site will be offered a nutritious meal to start the school day. This will aim to offer products with minimal ingredients and enhance children's concentration and well-being by ensuring they eat before lessons begin. Choice may include eggs, bagels, toast, porridge, fruit, Greek yoghurt and milk.